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AMERICAN STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION.

NEW SERIES, No. 87.

SEPTEMBER, 1909.

THE EXTENT OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE UNITED STATES.

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A discussion of unemployment necessarily relates only to those persons who are normally engaged in what the census describes as "gainful occupations." The literature on unemployment abounds in attempts, some fortunate, but more calamitous, to accurately limit the field to which the term "unemployed" should apply; but for the purpose of this paper no subtle distinctions will be drawn, nor will any attempt be made to define "unemployed" further than to say that those who are normally engaged in gainful occupations, and who for any reason are temporarily not so engaged, are unemployed. This broad construction of the term is justifiable in view of the fact that such a definition of unemployed forms the basis upon which the available statistics have been gathered.

What is the extent of unemployment in the United States? Much has been spoken and written on this theme; but, so far as the writer has been able to discover, no careful attempt has heretofore been made to compile the available facts and furnish a definite answer to the question. Most of the articles on the subject discuss the causes and effects of unemployment and analyze its remedies; some articles deal with specific cases; but the facts, so far as they exist, are referred to piece-meal or not at all.

This article represents an attempt to present, in a connected manner, the various available figures showing the extent of unemployment. While the writer has sought to point out certain relations between the groups of figures, the broad deductions and generalizations to which they may lend themselves are reserved for other papers and other writers.

The Massachusetts figures are the only available general statistics of unemployment before 1900. They were collected with the data for the Massachusetts censuses of 1885 and 1895, and they cover the regular occupations of those gainfully employed, as well as special or secondary occupations, to which the unemployed may have turned during periods of temporary idleness.

Table I presents a group of Massachusetts figures. The most surprising thing shown by the table is the lengthy period of idleness reported for those unemployed during 1885. For the state at large the average period of idleness is four months. In the individual towns it is slightly less. Equally remarkable is the high percentage of unemployment, which is nearly 30 per cent. for the state at large and twice as much for Fall River, the town showing the highest percentage.

TABLE I.—UNEMPLOYMENT IN MASSACHUSETTS.

| Authority. | Date of Figures. | Territory Covered. | Occupations Included. | Total Employees. | Per Cent. Idle. | Average Length of Time Idle. |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Mass. Bureau of Labor Statistics, | 1885 | Massachusetts | All | 816,470 | 29.59 | 4.11 months |
| " " " " " | " | Fall River | All | 26,220 | 56.38 | 3.49 " |
| " " " " " | " | Lynn | All | 21,305 | 43.13 | 3.88 " |
| " " " " " | " | Lowell | All | 31,624 | 33.71 | 3.61 " |
| " " " " " | " | Boston | All | 169,885 | 18.40 | 4.38 " |
| Massachusetts Census, 1895 | 1894 | Massachusetts | All | 925,781 | 27.27 | — |
| " " " " " | " | Fall River | All | 39,856 | 62.6 | — |
| " " " " " | " | Lynn | All | 25,064 | 30.6 | — |
| " " " " " | " | Lowell | All | 37,459 | 28.3 | — |
| " " " " " | " | Boston | All | 193,447 | 18.2 | — |

These early figures are valuable, not because of their intrinsic worth, but because they throw the later figures into perspective. They show that unemployment is by no means a new phenom-

enon, as in 1885 it was already an important factor in the typically industrial state of Massachusetts and was particularly noticeable in the industrial towns.

Unemployment since 1900 forms a topic that lends itself to discussion, because since that date considerable material has been collected which bears directly on the problem. In order to present the subject fairly the sources of the material will first be described, and then the material itself will be analyzed.

There are five principal sources of material on unemployment since 1900.

I. The United States Census of 1900 (volume on Occupations) deals at some length with "Unemployment." In 1880 questions on unemployment were asked by census takers, but the answers were not compiled because of lack of funds. The census of 1890 discusses "Unemployment," but very inadequately. In 1900 an attempt was made to treat the question thoroughly. Even in 1900 the figures are regarded as unsatisfactory by the compilers of the census and are described as representing tendencies rather than definite conclusions.

The figures of the census of 1900 are defective in that they do not give the average duration of unemployment for the various trades, but for this purpose classify the unemployed according to the duration of their unemployment. Thus among 5,227,472 males unemployed in all occupations in 1900:—

49.6 per cent. were unemployed 1-3 months.

39.6 per cent. were unemployed 4-6 months.

10.8 per cent. were unemployed 7-12 months.

In short, half of the unemployment is for less than 25 per cent. of the working time, and half of it for more than 25 per cent. of the working time. Thus nearly three millions of working men and boys were unemployed in 1900 for more than one-quarter of the full working time. The census does classify the unemployed by color, nativity, sex, trade, occupation, and state and territory of residence.

II. The Twenty-fourth Annual Report of the United States Commissioner of Labor (1903) is more restricted in scope, but more authoritative in result, than the census. It includes 25,440 families of whose lives a special investigation was made. This investigation was made by experts, while that of the census was made by persons wholly untrained in social investigations. The returns from this work of the Bureau of Labor can therefore be regarded as much more reliable than the census returns.

The 25,440 families selected by the Commissioner of Labor were representative of those gainfully employed in all parts of the country and in all types of employment, and the intensive character of the study makes certain a result of considerable value. The report of the Commissioner does not go into such analytical detail as does the United States Census. The unemployed are classified according to nativity, color, and length of time unemployed; but no attempt is made to classify them by industries.

III. The reports of the New York Bureau of Labor Statistics furnish the most thoroughly compiled, the most ably presented, and the most up-to-date unemployment material available. The Bureau receives reports from the secretaries of as many labor unions as are willing to make the returns, and it is thus enabled to publish, four times a year, a group of facts regarding the employment of about 400,000 labor union members in New York State. The material secured from the labor unions is thoroughly analyzed, and the unemployed are classified by trades, causes of unemployment, months and years unemployed.

The New York figures, coming as they do from union men alone, are not entirely comparable with the census and other figures that are collected irrespective of union membership. There has been considerable discussion as to whether union figures should show a greater or less percentage of unemployment than general figures. On the one hand, it is contended that the unions consist almost exclusively of the skilled workers, who are employed with much greater regularity than the unskilled workers. On the other hand, it is held that many of

the unionized skilled trades, such as glass blowing and building construction, are distinctly seasonal trades, and therefore show a high proportion of unemployment. Then the strikes and stoppages, due to union influence, are responsible for much unemployment. The figures presented in this paper do not furnish any adequate basis for a conclusion as to whether union or non-union workers show the higher percentage of unemployment. All that can be said is that the New York figures cannot be used as strictly corroborative of the figures from other sources.

To make the comparison still more difficult, there is a slight difference in the methods of statement between the New York figures and the United States Census and Commissioner of Labor figures. The New York figures state average unemployment for the year. Thus, if January shows 20 per cent. unemployment and July 10 per cent., the New York method of figuring the unemployment for the year would be to add the 20 per cent. and the 10 per cent. and divide by 2, giving an average unemployment for the year of 15 per cent. In the cases of the Census and the Commissioner's report, however, the unemployment is the total for the year, not the average. Thus in the above illustration, if 20 men in a hundred were unemployed in January and 10 men in a hundred in July, and if the 20 men and the 10 men formed different groups, no member of the group of 20 belonging also to the group of 10, the unemployment would be 30 per cent. for the year. The difference in these two statements is caused by the fact that the New York figures are compiled from the labor union returns,—the question asked is, "What per cent. of your men are unemployed?"—while the census and Commissioner of Labor figures are compiled from individual investigation,—the question asked is, "Were you unemployed?" The resulting difference is apparent. Aside from these slight differences in method the two groups of figures are fairly comparable. It will be noticed, in the succeeding tables, that the percentage of unemployment given by the various authorities is very similar for similar industries and geographical locations.

IV. The United States Geological Survey issues an annual report in which there is a statement of the number of work days and idle days in the coal-mining industry of the United States.

V. The Illinois (annual) Coal Report contains similar material for Illinois. In addition, detailed figures are given for the individual mines. These coal-mine figures give the unemployment not of men but of an industry, and they, therefore, indicate the probable number of days that a miner can go to work if he wishes to, but they do not, like the other figures dealing with unemployment, take into consideration sickness, accident, or any other cause that might keep a man from working. They represent opportunity to work and not work actually performed.

These five authorities, taken as a whole, are by no means satisfactory, but they represent the total available resources of one who seeks to learn the extent of unemployment in the United States, and an attempt will now be made to analyze and compare them. Unemployment in 1900 is shown in Table II. Four of the five authorities cited contribute to this group of figures, but the census figures do not give the length of time unemployed, as was explained in a previous paragraph. It will be noted from the table that unemployment is most severe among the miners. The Census shows that nearly half of them were unemployed at some time during the year, while the figures from Illinois show 126 idle days, and those from the United States Geological Survey show 96 idle days, out of a possible 306 working days,—in each case about a third of the maximum days during which employment is possible. In the lower part of the table a contrast is presented between the census figures and the New York Bureau figures in three specific industries,—printing, tobacco work, and textile work. The census figures cover a much larger number of employees than the New York figures, and in the first two industries show a much higher percentage of unemployment. As previously explained, however, this should be the case because of a difference in method of compilation. When the difference in method is taken into

account, it will appear that the census figures and the New York figures correspond very closely.

Table II shows that, excepting the miners, about one-quarter of those gainfully occupied during 1900 were unemployed. This conclusion is borne out by the census and the New York figures, which show unemployment in "Industry" to the extent of 27 per cent. and 20 per cent. respectively.

The 1902 unemployment figures are presented in order to bring out the relation of the United States Commissioner's report of 1903 to the general problem. This report, as already indicated, is entitled to great consideration, owing to the intensive method of the investigation underlying it. It will be noted that the New York Bureau figures and the coal-mine figures in Table III are almost identical with the same figures in Table II. From this it might fairly be inferred that unemployment was about as extensive in 1902 as in 1900. In view of this stability of unemployment in two cases where comparison is possible and in view of the careful manner in which the United States Commissioner's report was compiled, the unemployment of half of the heads of families coming under the United States Commissioner's investigation is most startling.

TABLE II.—UNEMPLOYMENT IN 1900.

| Authority. | Date of Figures. | Territory Covered. | Occupations Included. | Union Members Only? | Total Employees | Per Cent. Idle. | Average Number Days Idle. |
|---|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| United States Census, 1900 | 1900 | United States | All | No | 29,073,233 | 22.3 | — |
| " " " " | " | United States | Manufacturing and Mechanical Pursuits | No | 7,085,309 | 27.2 | — |
| " " " " | " | New York | Manufacturing and Mechanical Pursuits | No | 260,821 | 25.2 | — |
| " " " " | " | New York | Trade and Transportation | No | 65,388 | 8.7 | — |
| New York Bureau Labor Statistics, 24th Annual Report | " | New York | Industry | Yes | 230,000 | 20 | 62 |
| United States Census, 1900 | " | United States | Miners | No | 562,417 | 44.3 | — |
| United States Geological Survey, 1906 | " | United States | Coal Mining | No | 448,581 | — | 96 |
| Illinois Coal Report, 1907 | " | Illinois | Coal Mining | No | 39,384 | — | 126 |
| United States Census, 1900 | " | United States | Printers | No | 139,166 | 15 | — |
| 18th Report New York Bureau | " | New York | Printers | Yes | 16,983 | 8 | 38 |
| United States Census, 1900 | " | United States | Tobacco Workers | No | 87,955 | 27.2 | — |
| 18th Report New York Bureau | " | New York | Tobacco Workers | Yes | 11,850 | 19 | 22 |
| United States Census, 1900 | " | United States | Clothing and Textiles | No | 489,000 | 23.8 | — |
| 18th Report New York Bureau | " | New York | Clothing and Textiles | Yes | 31,374 | 31 | 60 |

The United States Commissioner's figures are much higher than the New York Bureau's, showing more than one-half of the heads of families unemployed as compared with 25 per cent. of unemployment in New York. This disparity in returns results from three things: (a) the United States figures include workers in general, the New York figures union members only; (b) the United States figures show total unemployment, the New York figures average unemployment; (c) most of the families studied by the Commissioner had an annual income of less than \$1,000, and a large proportion had an income under \$750. It is generally supposed that unemployment is most prevalent among the lowest paid, and these figures would seem to bear out the supposition.

From the carefully worked out Commissioner's figures it is apparent that among the average group of workers earning less than \$750 the possibilities are that in a normal year one man in every two will be unemployed, and that the unemployment will average 60 days, or one-fifth of the total working time. In a normal year the average wage-earner under \$750, therefore, has one chance in two of losing one-fifth of the working time.

The figures presented for 1900 and 1902 indicate conditions of employment in years of prosperity. More figures were available in 1900 and 1902 than for any other two years, and thus these years were selected for discussion. The figures compiled show that in two prosperous years, in all industries, there is a considerable amount of unemployment. The latest figures, those for 1908, are taken in a year of marked business depression. They are not, therefore, typical, as they represent unemployment in a period of adversity, while the figures for 1900 and 1902 represent unemployment in periods of prosperity.

The figures for 1908 are given in Table IV. Unfortunately no other adequate figures are procurable than those furnished by the New York Bureau of Labor Statistics for the end of March and September of that year.

It will be noted that the March figures show an unemployment in the building trades of 56 per cent., while for all trades the average is 37 per cent. The surprising nature of the Septem-

ber figures will be recognized when it is remembered that the average unemployment for September is ordinarily from 5 per cent. to 6 per cent. The average for September, 1908, is 22.5 per cent. with a maximum of 33.5 per cent. in the building trades. Other trades which ordinarily show a relatively low employment have climbed, in 1908, to a percentage of 20, while two of the trades, even in September, which is a month of great activity, have touched a percentage of 30.

TABLE IV.—UNEMPLOYMENT, NEW YORK STATE,* 1908.

| Authority. | Date of Figures. | Occupations Included. | Total Em- ployees. | Per Cent. Idle. |
|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Bulletin 37 | End of March | Industry | 261,465 | 35.7 |
| " " | " " " | Building Trades | 66,188 | 56.0 |
| " " | " " " | Clothing and Textiles | 23,179 | 46.7 |
| " " | " " " | Printing | 21,719 | 17.9 |
| " " | " " " | Tobacco Workers | 7,212 | 25.8 |
| " " | " " " | Wood Workers | 7,867 | 31.1 |
| " 39 | " " September | Industry | 288,181 | 22.5 |
| " " | " " " | Building Trades | 88,009 | 33.5 |
| " " | " " " | Clothing Trades | 22,829 | 30.4 |
| " " | " " " | Printing | 21,547 | 12.7 |
| " " | " " " | Tobacco Workers | 8,250 | 14.2 |
| " " | " " " | Wood Workers | 7,843 | 21.1 |

* New York Bureau Labor Statistics, Bulletins 37 and 39.

Tables V and VI show the unemployment in two industries where the greatest amount of data is procurable. These data have been used in the previous tables, but are presented here to show the extent of conformity between the authorities for two specific industries. Both industries have dull and active seasons, and they, therefore, show a higher percentage of unemployment than a non-seasonal industry like printing. It is interesting to note that in both cases the authorities agree closely about the amount of unemployment from year to year. The miner is idle about one-third and the builder about one-fifth of the working days in an ordinary year. The census non-union figures show the total unemployment among certain of the building trades which are unusually seasonal to

TABLE V.—UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE BUILDING TRADES.

| Authority. | Date of Figures. | Territory Covered. | Occupations Included. | Union Members Only? | Total Employees. | Per Cent. Idle. | Average Number Days Idle. |
|---|------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| 24th Report, New York Bureau Labor Statistics, | 1897 | New York | Building Trades | Yes | 47,000 | — | 75 |
| " " " " " " | 1900 | New York | Building Trades | Yes | 77,344 | 24 | 76 |
| " " " " " " | 1905 | New York | Building Trades | Yes | 127,000 | 15.3 | 66 |
| United States Census, 1900 | 1900 | United States | Plasterers | No | 35,649 | 56.1 | — |
| " " " " " " | 1900 | United States | Masons | No | 160,638 | 55.5 | — |
| " " " " " " | 1900 | United States | Carpenters | No | 599,707 | 41.4 | — |
| Bulletin 37, New York Bureau Labor Statistics . | End March, 1908 | New York | Building Trades | Yes | 66,188 | 56 | — |
| Bulletin 39, New York Bureau Labor Statistics . | End Sept., 1908 | New York | Building Trades | Yes | 88,009 | 33.5 | — |

TABLE VI.—UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG MINERS.

| Authority. | Date of Figures. | Territory Covered. | Occupations Included. | Union Members Only? | Total Employees. | Per Cent. Idle. | Average Number Days Idle. |
|---|------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| United States Census, 1900 | 1900 | United States | Miners | No | 562,417 | 44.3 | — |
| United States Geological Survey, 1906 | 1895 | United States | Miners | No | 382,879 | — | 113 |
| " " " " " " | 1900 | United States | Miners | No | 448,581 | — | 96 |
| " " " " " " | 1905 | United States | Miners | No | 626,035 | — | 96 |
| Illinois Coal Report, 1907 | 1895 | Illinois | Miners | No | 38,630 | — | 125 |
| " " " " " " | 1900 | Illinois | Miners | No | 39,384 | — | 125 |
| " " " " " " | 1905 | Illinois | Miners | No | 59,230 | — | 134 |

be 50 per cent., while the New York union figures show the average unemployment for all building trades to be 20 per cent.

The New York figures will also be given in a way that will show the unemployment in the various trades. "Average" figures convey a good general impression, but they cannot show the real burden of unemployment. An unemployment of 30 per cent. in clothing and 10 per cent. in printing give an average of 20 per cent. of unemployment. This, however, does not in the least degree relieve the burden on the clothing trade. There unemployment is still 30 per cent., although the average is shown to be 20 per cent. If the printers with a low percentage helped to pay the bills of the clothing workers with a high percentage, "average unemployment" would mean something. As, however, each man must stand on his own feet, 30 per cent. unemployment among the clothing trades is for them as serious a matter as if the printers likewise had 30 per cent. The low unemployment in one group does not relieve high unemployment in another group. As average figures are so inadequate, though in most cases necessary, it becomes a matter of considerable moment if the figures for the individual trades can be presented. Selecting a group of trades as compiled in the New York returns, —stationary engines; theatres and music; public employment; food and liquors; restaurants; printing and binding; transportation; tobacco; wood working;—metals, machinery, etc.; clothing, textiles; and building trades,—it will be found that there is a marked difference in unemployment between the first three and the last two. Among the first three, unemployment averages from 8 to 10 per cent; among the last two, from 45 to 55 per cent. Six of the trades show an unemployment of less than 25 per cent., while six show more than 25 per cent. The trades showing the greatest unemployment are seasonal (clothing and building); but metals and machinery, wood working and tobacco working, are not seasonal, yet even here the percentage is high. The variation between trades is so marked as to warrant the statement that "average unemployment" gives little idea of the real conditions of unemployment.

TABLE VII.—TOTAL DAYS IDLE: COAL MINES.

| Date of Figures. | United States Bituminous. | Pennsylvania Anthracite. | Ohio. | West Virginia. | Alabama. |
|------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------|----------------|----------|
| 1890 | 80 | 106 | — | — | — |
| 1891 | 83 | 103 | — | — | — |
| 1892 | 87 | 108 | — | — | — |
| 1893 | 102 | 109 | — | — | — |
| 1894 | 135 | 116 | — | — | — |
| 1895 | 112 | 110 | — | — | — |
| 1896 | 114 | 132 | — | — | — |
| 1897 | 110 | 156 | — | — | — |
| 1898 | 95 | 154 | — | — | — |
| 1899 | 72 | 133 | — | — | — |
| 1900 | 72 | 140 | — | — | — |
| 1901 | 81 | 110 | — | — | — |
| 1902 | 76 | 190 | — | — | — |
| 1903 | 81 | 100 | 112 | 96 | 78 |
| 1904 | 104 | 106 | 131 | 109 | 90 |
| 1905 | 95 | 91 | 130 | 97 | 81 |
| 1906 | 93 | 111 | 139 | 86 | 69 |
| 1907 | 72 | 86 | 107 | 76 | 64 |

The figures of unemployment relating to a series of years are procurable from the coal-mine reports and from the reports of the New York Bureau of Labor Statistics. The coal-mine figures are the most extensive, and clearly show the variations in unemployment which occur in the coal-mining industry from year to year. Table VII gives the number of idle days in the mines of the leading coal-producing states and for the country at large. It will be observed that the average number of days of idleness in the anthracite coal mines is 100 per year, while in the bituminous mines it is only about 75 per year. There is, however, considerable variation from year to year. Thus in the anthracite field the range is from 86 in 1907 to 190 in 1902, and in the bituminous field from 72 in 1907 to 135 in 1894. For Ohio, West Virginia, and Alabama the figures go back only to 1903, and are therefore not so satisfactory as the other figures. Nevertheless, they show the same tendency to vary from year to year, although the variation is not so great. In all the figures that extend back so far, the hard years of 1893 and 1897 show clearly the effect of the bad times in the large per-

centage of idleness. Accepting these figures as indicative of general conditions, a coal miner may expect unemployment in every year equivalent to one-fourth or one-third of his working time, and in years of unusual depression unemployment equivalent to five-twelfths to one-half of his total working time.

The New York figures are more significant because they are procurable for the entire year, as well as for two definite periods in the year, March and September. These latter figures are the latest procurable (1908). A comparison of the annual average unemployment in New York State for the years from 1897 to 1906 shows a gradual decrease in the extent of unemployment from 26 per cent. in 1897 to 9 per cent. in 1906, with slight variations above and below the average in some of the years. The unemployment at the end of March, however, which is procurable up to March, 1908, shows a higher percentage of unemployment for March 31, 1908, than in any previous year since the figures were first compiled, unemployment in 1908 being almost 36 per cent., while in 1897, the highest previous record, it was but 30 per cent. The same thing is true of September, that month in 1908 showing 22 per cent. of unemployment as against 13 per cent., the highest previous record, which was attained in 1897, 1898, and 1900.

It is therefore fair to conclude that for the unionized trades of New York State, for the coal industry of the United States, and, by inference, for the general industries of the United States, the following points hold true:—

- A. Unemployment is always a factor in modern industry.
- B. The average miner can work, from year to year, about two-thirds of the time.
- C. In other industries the average unemployment from year to year is about one-fifth.
- D. In some years the unemployment is several times more severe than in others.
- E. 1908 was a year of unusually severe unemployment.

Figures for different portions of the same year are likewise available in the Illinois coal reports and the reports of the

New York Bureau. The Illinois Coal Report relates to coal mines only, and merely gives the percentage of the total coal output which was produced in the different months. These figures do not, therefore, definitely show unemployment, but by inference they show that a greater or less number of days were worked in given months. It is evident that a much greater amount of coal is used in the winter than in the summer months. In Illinois 60 per cent. more coal is mined in January than in July. It is fair to conclude that unemployment is higher in the summer months than in the winter months. There is thus a regular variation from month to month so that a miner may count definitely on a higher proportion of unemployment in the summer than in the winter.

The New York figures are definite and conclusive. They cover accurately nearly 400,000 union men in one state, and they are carefully analyzed by trades.

Figures for the state at large, for seasonal trades (building and clothing), and for one regular trade (printing) are given in Table VIII.

TABLE VIII.—PERCENTAGE OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN NEW YORK IN VARIOUS MONTHS,* 1902 AND 1906.

| Months. | All Trades. | | Building Trades. | | Clothing Trade. | | Printing. | |
|---------------------|-------------|-------|------------------|-------|-----------------|-------|-----------|-------|
| | 1902. | 1906. | 1902. | 1906. | 1902. | 1906. | 1902. | 1906. |
| January | 20.9 | 15.0 | 33.6 | 14.3 | 19.2 | 8.1 | 12.2 | 19.6 |
| February | 18.7 | 15.3 | 34.3 | 16.4 | 5.4 | 12.5 | 12.9 | 18.9 |
| March | 17.3 | 11.6 | 23.5 | 9.4 | 21.4 | 10.2 | 14.7 | 18.1 |
| April | 15.3 | 7.3 | 19.1 | 6.7 | 27.6 | 9.4 | 13.2 | 17.0 |
| May | 14.0 | 7.0 | 13.3 | 7.6 | 29.1 | 10.4 | 9.2 | 16.9 |
| June | 14.5 | 6.3 | 14.1 | 6.4 | 28.3 | 5.3 | 12.9 | 16.3 |
| July | 15.6 | 7.6 | 12.9 | 10.8 | 34.3 | 5.2 | 13.6 | 15.8 |
| August | 7.1 | 5.8 | 7.6 | 6.9 | 3.9 | 3.5 | 12.8 | 15.7 |
| September | 6.3 | 6.3 | 5.1 | 6.4 | 6.6 | 8.0 | 12.3 | 15.5 |
| October | 11.2 | 6.9 | 14.2 | 7.3 | 18.1 | 9.4 | 10.9 | 15.8 |
| November | 14.3 | 7.6 | 13.4 | 10.2 | 36.9 | 8.4 | 11.0 | 14.4 |
| December | 22.2 | 15.4 | 25.6 | 19.2 | 39.5 | 11.5 | 12.6 | 13.2 |

* Twenty-fourth Annual Report New York Bureau Labor Statistics.

For all trades the amount of unemployment in August and September is very low, while for December and January it is two or three times as extensive. This is even more strikingly true of the building trades which are largely dependent upon weather conditions. Both of these instances are the reverse of conditions in the mining industry, where the greatest activity occurs during the winter. The clothing trades show similar contrasts between activity and inactivity; but their activity comes in two periods each year instead of in one period, as is the case in most seasonal trades. The contrast between these seasonal trades, with their marked variation from month to month, and the printing trade, with its marked stability throughout the year, is striking.

From these facts may be drawn several conclusions regarding the variations in unemployment from one part of the year to another.

A. Unemployment in some trades is several times as great in winter as it is in summer.

B. Unemployment is far less common in summer than in winter. (Coal mining, theatres, and clothing work form an exception to this rule.)

C. Some trades in ordinarily prosperous years show an average unemployment of more than 30 per cent. during the winter months.

From the foregoing figures certain conclusions may be drawn regarding the average extent of unemployment.

From occupation to occupation there is considerable variation in unemployment. While unemployment is a factor common to all occupations, there are some, such as coal mining, building, and clothing work, in which unemployment plays a far more important part than it does in others, such as printing. And, while averages mean very little, the average wage-earner in an average year may look forward to one chance in four or five of being unemployed.

There is also considerable change in unemployment from year to year. The New York statistics and the mine statistics are the only ones that furnish data on unemployment over a series

of years. From these it is clear that the average for prosperous times is no index of conditions over a long period of years. While unemployment fluctuates somewhat from year to year, these fluctuations are slight compared with the all-prevalent unemployment of years of depression. In a year of depression in some occupations more than half of the workers are unemployed at one time, and a canvass of total unemployment for the entire year would doubtless run the figure up to 65 per cent. or even to 75 per cent. in these occupations.

Unemployment also varies from season to season. There are certain trades that are seasonal in their nature. They may depend upon the weather, like the building trades, or they may be regulated by trade demands, like the clothing trade, with its spring and fall styles. In these trades the probabilities of unemployment during some period of the year are always high, even in the most prosperous years, while in years of depression the trades are practically submerged at the dull season, unemployment being the rule rather than the exception.

Briefly summarized, it may be said that unemployment is inseparable from the present system of industry: (1) industrial depressions mean extensive unemployment; (2) certain trades are subject to violent fluctuations of demand which result in unemployment; (3) other trades depend on the weather, and, therefore, result in unemployment.

Individual incapacity in the form of sickness, accident, inefficiency, or some other purely personal factor also means unemployment. Taken together, these two things, industrial uncertainty and personal incapacity, make unemployment a constant factor in the life of the average wage-worker.